

Community Participation and Successful Implementation of Constituency Development Fund Projects in Kenya

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Abstract: Community participation is important for any project to succeed. This article is filtered from a study carried out in Kenya to determine the role of community participation in the successful implementation of the constituency development fund (CDF) projects in Kenya. The article presents results on the community participation on identifying Projects to be funded by CDF; How the CDF projects were identified; participation of community members during CDF Projects Implementation; involvement of community members in CDF Projects Monitoring, CDF Projects Evaluation; and the Levels of Satisfaction in the Implementation of CDF Projects in constituencies. The results show that community members and citizens are less involved in the CDF project management from selection through to evaluation. Basing on Arnstein's [1] Ladder of participation theory, the study concludes that community participation is important in the management of CDF projects in Kenya. This is because it ensures sustainable development and accountability in the management of funds allocated to the constituencies.

Keywords: Community, Development, Project, Satisfaction, Implementation

INTRODUCTION

Successful implementation of a community project is significant in achieving development agenda in any country [2] [3]. Community Development Project begins with the identification of a need. The Kenyan Constituency Development Fund (CDF) policy was founded upon this pillar in 2003 during the first term of Kibaki government [4]. The fund was established under section 23(2,3,8.4) of the CDF Act 2003, amended in 2007 and revised 2013 and it provided a procedure on how to identify a project to be funded by the constituency fund which was disseminated to the constituencies and managed by the members of parliament [5] [6]. The policy provides for community participation and sharing of opinions and vision through the need analysis and group discussions in order to establish the priorities in the constituencies.

The CDF Act, 2007 has it that CDF was aimed at taking development to the citizens, ensuring specific proportion of the annual revenue devolved to the constituencies for development and eradicating poverty among the local community members. The CDF has its roots from the Special Rural Development Policy (SRDP) of 1965 in which a conference by the Ministry of Economic planning and development (MEPD) was convened to discuss the ways of solving problems of rural development, education and employment [7]. The objectives of SRDP were; to increase rural incomes by

raising levels of agricultural, commercial, and industrial enterprise, reduction of unemployment in the rural areas by increasing wage employment in public and private projects and establishing effective procedures and techniques for quick rural development in Kenya as a whole [8]. It was also aimed at applying procedures and the techniques to other rural development projects in similar areas and improving development capacity and potential of public administrators.

The CDF is one of the devolved funds meant to achieve rapid social economic development at constituency level through financing of locally prioritized projects and enhanced community participation [9]. The CDF has facilitated the implementation of a number of local level development projects aimed at poverty reduction and social economic development of the local community.

However, studies conducted on the effectiveness of implementation of Community Development Funds show that lack of community involvement reduces efficiency and effectiveness [3] [10]. Mungai [11] supports that the exclusion of community participation in Kenyan case led to tribalism and nepotism in the award of tenders, lack of transparency in allocation, bribery to secure contracts, and location of CDF office at the MPs home or rented from Mps premises at exorbitant and unrealistic

monthly rates. The Community Development Fund project cycle consists of several stages: identification, planning, implementation and monitoring.

Questions have been raised as to whether the Constituency Development Fund met its stated purposes, giving an indication that the extent to which CDF has met its objectives remains significant for research. Kerore [12] argues that CDF management faces a number of challenges, some of which include project identification criteria and the organization structure in management of CDF projects. This gaps are not well highlighted in the CDF Act 2003 revised 2007 [9]. A research carried out by IEA in 2006 in all Kenyan Constituencies showed that sharing of CDF within the constituency is not always an easy thing [11] [13]. Communities have complained of not being involved in CDF affairs and that the projects being initiated do not address their needs. Many development experts have argued that community participation is paramount in successful implementation of CDF projects, and that many projects fail because of lack of adequate participation of the community [11][5][12]. Some members of the community raised questions on

how their funds are being spent. This can only arise when they are not involved in the process. Due to the needs at the constituency level and unsuccessful implementation of some CDF projects and IEA reports of inappropriate projects and failure of projects due lack of community participation, this study aimed at finding out how community involvement in identifying projects affects successful implementation of CDF projects in Kenya.

Arnstein's [1] Ladder of participation Theory was preferred to inform this study. The theory recognizes that there are different levels of participation in any management of a project. These levels include manipulation, therapy of citizens through consultation and to genuine participation. Only at the genuine participation do we have the levels of participation in which citizen have a considerable measure of control [14]. The use of a ladder also implies that more control is always better than less control. However, the community may not always desire increased control because it leads to failure of community based projects.



Fig. 1 A ladder of participation (Source: Arnstein 1969)[1]

The ladder presents that at the bottom, there is more control and manipulation and this does not engage community members. As the management changes up the ladder, it accommodates more views from the community members and engages them. The total citizen or community member control is achieved at the top of the ladder and at this level, projects are likely to succeed. This theory was useful in determining the level of citizen participation in the determination of CDF projects and the impact this has on the success of the projects in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers used Descriptive research design because of its ability to determine and report the way things are and help them to describe phenomena in terms of altitude, values and characteristics [15]. The

study purposively targeted residents of Mt. Elgon Constituency in which they interviewed 20 members of Cheptais Community Development Programme, 10 members of Kareu Mpya and 5 members of Mt Elgon CDF committees. The participant sources are outlined and described as below:

- i. **Cheptais Community Development Programme (CCDP):** The organization is situated 100m from Cheptais market. The researcher intends to interview 20 members of staff of the organization who represent the community in development projects in the constituency and may provide the required information regarding implementation of CDF project.
- ii. **Kareu Mpya:** The organization is within Cheptais market in Mt Elgon district. It

engages in projects that regard empowerment and capacity building of community members. The researcher intends to get some relevant information regarding community participation and involvement in development projects in the constituency.

- iii. **Mt Elgon CDF Committee:** The researcher intends to obtain information from representatives of the community in the CDF committee about the levels of community participation and effectiveness of the methods used to engage the community in CDF affairs.

The researchers used interviews and questionnaires to collect data from the participants. Data obtained from personal interviews and questionnaires was checked, classified, elicited, coded and interpreted in line with objectives of the study. The researcher used descriptive statistics namely: percentiles, mean, variance, standard

deviations and frequency distribution table then presented through figures, tables, percentages, and pie charts. The choice of these techniques lays in their ability to quantitatively measure and present population parameters. The following results were obtained:

RESULTS DISCUSSION

Community participation on Identifying Projects to be funded by CDF

On the community participation and involvement in identifying projects, Table 1 reveals that 70% of the respondents did not participate in project identification. Only 10% were aware of an individual who participated in projects selection constituted of the aggregate respondents. As a result, the study revealed that majority (80%) were dissatisfied with the funded projects. This indicates that there is low community involvement in identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the projects.

Table 1: Community participation on identifying projects to be funded by CDF

	Questions	Response		Total Respondents	% Respondents	
		Yes	No		Yes	No
1	Are there criteria to identify development projects?	40	110	150	27	73
2	Did you participate in identifying CDF in your location?	45	105	150	30	70
3	Did you know anyone who took part in identifying a project in your location?	3	147	150	10	90
4	Are you satisfied with the projects funded?	30	120	150	20	80

How the CDF projects were identified

The researcher sought to identify how CDF projects were identified. The obtained results (Table 2) revealed that 40 respondents said that there was a certain criterion for project selection. Ten (10) of them said it was selected by few powerful influential people,

fifteen (15) respondents stated that it was done by CDF Committee, twenty (20) of them said it was done by the area MP while six (6) stated that the projects were chosen by the residents. As shown, very few think that community participated is involved in identifying the CDF Projects.

Table 2: Identification of the CDF projects

Identifier	Agree
Community	6
CDF Committee	15
Area MP	20
Influential People	10
Certain Criteria	40

CDF Projects Implementation

The research showed that there is low community participation in decision making as the results showed that 50% of the respondents were not very optimistic that CDF Committee did decision such

as procuring goods and services. About 30% believed that CDF Committee is solely involved in procurement. In addition, 20% said that the CDF Committee is not considered. This has been showed in table 3.

Table 3 CDF Projects Implementation

Question	Total Responses	% Yes	% No	% Not sure
Are the committee members involved in procurement of CDF project facilities?	150	30	20	50

CDF Projects Monitoring

On project monitoring, 30% of the respondents believed that the community participates in monitoring of the CDF projects, 70% said that they are not involved. Table 4 shows that 65% approved residents

analysis on tackling disputes related to Community Development Fund projects and voted it very effective while 26% said it was ineffective. Table 4 reveals that there is low number of residents involved in CDF project monitoring.

Table 4: CDF Projects Monitoring

	Questions	Total Responses	% Yes	% No
1	Are the community members involved in monitoring projects?	150	30%	70%
2	Are you aware of any cases of complains regarding CDF?	150	65%	35%
3	Do you know of mechanism in which this complains can be resolved?	150	20%	80%

CDF Projects Evaluation

As to whether the citizens were involved in the project evaluation, the results in table 5 reveals that the residents were not involved in evaluation of CDF projects. This is because many of them are not satisfied with the outcome. Only 15% of the respondents think that CDF projects served the intended purpose while 50% think that the CDF projects performed relatively fair. However, 35% were completely not satisfied.

About 10% said that the CDF projects met the expectations of the people of Mount Elgon Constituency, 60% were fully dissatisfied, but acknowledged the efforts being made, 30% said that there is no expectations being met. Majority (80%) of the respondents knew the feedback channel regarding CDF projects but doubted its effectiveness in functioning. 18% were not aware of the feedback mechanism put in place.

Table 5: CDF Projects Evaluation

Questions	% Completely	% Average	% Not at all	% Responses
To what level has the completed projects met the stated objectives?	15	50	35	100
To what extend did the CDF project meet your expectation as a community?	10	60	30	100

Analysis of Success Implementation of CDF Projects

As to whether the participation of citizens/community members would lead to successful implementation of the CDF projects in the study area, majority (80%) of the respondents thought that the participation of the community in identification, monitoring and implementation of the CDF projects would increase chances of success. They said it would increase the level of satisfaction of the community members and enable CDF Committee come up with sustainable projects. Only 20% argued that involving the community would actually slow down process of development in the constituency because it would lead

to slow decision-making as it would require a lot of consultation.

Analysis of the Levels of Satisfaction

As to whether the respondents were satisfied with the project implementation, only 15% of the sample population said they were satisfied with the CDF projects identification, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. A total of 30% reported that they were quite satisfied while majority (55%) said they were not satisfied at all. This report is tabulated in table 6 below:

Table 6 Assessment of the levels of satisfaction

	Satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Dissatisfied
Percentage totals	15%	30%	55%

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing results, it is clear that there is low community involvement in selection, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of CDF projects in Mt. Elgon Constituency. This could be the main reason as to why many projects have been

unsuccessful in most of the constituencies in Kenya. Although the CDF purpose is to help the residents, analysis of the data for Mt. Elgon Constituency indicates only few people close to the Members of parliament and CDF committee members and CDF officers were involved in implementing the projects.

The research supports community participation, which promotes sustainable development and accountability in the management of funds allocated to the constituency. All stakeholders should take part in order for the community based projects to succeed.

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